

Title, director and release year?

GMO OMG is a 2013 documentary directed, written, and starring Jeremy Siefert, who has taken part in several other social documentaries. The film is about the use of genetically modified organisms in food products.

What is the central argument or narrative of the film?

The central argument is that because of the “precautionary principle”, we should avoid Genetically Modified Foods (GM Foods) until we know for sure that it is safe for human consumption. He also contends that if GM Foods are to be sold they should be labeled as such.

How is the argument or narrative made and sustained? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The argument is made and sustained primarily through anecdotes and Seifert talking to his children about GMOs. He shows how Haitians burned GM Seeds from Monsanto and how European countries are generally more anti-GMO than the US. He calls numerous food stories/companies to ask about their policies and knowledge of GMOs and

when they avoid questions or refuse to answer it's presented as proof of the dangers of GMOs.

**What sustainability issues did you spot?
Identify and explain each. (Examples -
Political, Legal, Economic, Technological,
Media, Organizational, Educational,
Behavioral, Cultural, Ecological)**

The sustainability issues addressed were largely economic, political and behavioral from a public health standpoint. The massive economic powers of the big GMO companies do have a lot of sway which is understandably concerning, and they are able to lobby congress to shoot down labeling bills. Additionally, there are big public health concerns of eating GM Foods engineered to kill insects and such even though there is little actual evidence of them being harmful to humans.

**What parts of the film did you find most
persuasive and/or compelling?**

The most compelling part was the only part that tried to be scientific which is a segment featuring the research of Gilles-Éric Séralini, who presents a study that shows GMO increasing risks of cancer and kidney disease. When I researched this issue further, several reputable publications with no political ties debunked his research.

Does the film have emotional appeal to you? Why? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The film tries to have an emotional appeal by using his children and dressing them up in hazmat suits as they go through the fields full of GM Corn, but knowing how ridiculous he is being it is hard to really be moved.

Does the film rely more on science or emotion? (How does the film balance the scientific argument and the emotional argument?)

The film essentially relies entirely on emotion. There is only a little bit of science which is cherry-picked to fit his pre-constructed narrative. He talks about how things used to be, and how even rainbow trout in a pond in the mountains aren't "natural", yet he and his sons fish these trout with metal poles and fishing line. Is this the "natural" way that rainbow trout would have been hunted by native americans? Siefert fails to honestly contextualize GMOs in 2014.

Does the film want you to do something?
If the film does suggest action, do you
think it is a good idea? Will the suggested
action help?

The film mostly suggests backing labeling efforts and avoiding GM Foods by buying directly from markets. While buying directly from farmers is good, and helping to liberate farmers from the harmful economic positions they are in is good, ultimately Seifert's fear mongering may be misguided.

Are there other actions that are not
suggested that should be taken?

I think the main action should be to research this issue thoroughly through real science, and in the meantime help oppose the economic powers which keep farmers trapped. That seems to be the real injustice.

What was the target audience for this
film? Why?

The target audience seems to be young to middle aged folks who may have children like Seifert and also have decent buying power. Using his

children the way he does likely appeals more to new parents like he and his wife.